



*Exchange*  
FOR CHANGE

**ACT  
CONTAINER  
DEPOSIT  
SCHEME**

22/23

ANNUAL STATUTORY REPORT



How it works

1

RECYCLED  
PLASTIC BOTTLE

THE EARTH



# Contents

<b>About the ACT Container Deposit Scheme</b>	<b>4</b>
How it works	4
A partnership model	7
Return points in the ACT	8
Return point types	9
Where does the material go?	9
<b>Chair's foreword</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>CEO's overview</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Network operator's message</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>2022-23 scheme performance overview</b>	<b>15</b>
Goal, Result and Priorities	15
2022-23 scheme highlights	16
Year in review	18
<b>Our contribution to sustainability</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Priority 1: Customer excellence</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Priority 2: Sustainable operations</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Priority 3: Industry participation</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>Looking ahead to 2023-24</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>Appendix 1 Financials</b>	<b>48</b>



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Disclaimer: The information contained in this publication is based on knowledge and understanding at the time of writing in September 2023. However, because of advances in knowledge, users are reminded to ensure that the information they rely on is up to date and to check its currency with the appropriate Exchange for Change (ACT) Pty Ltd officer.

# About the ACT Container Deposit Scheme

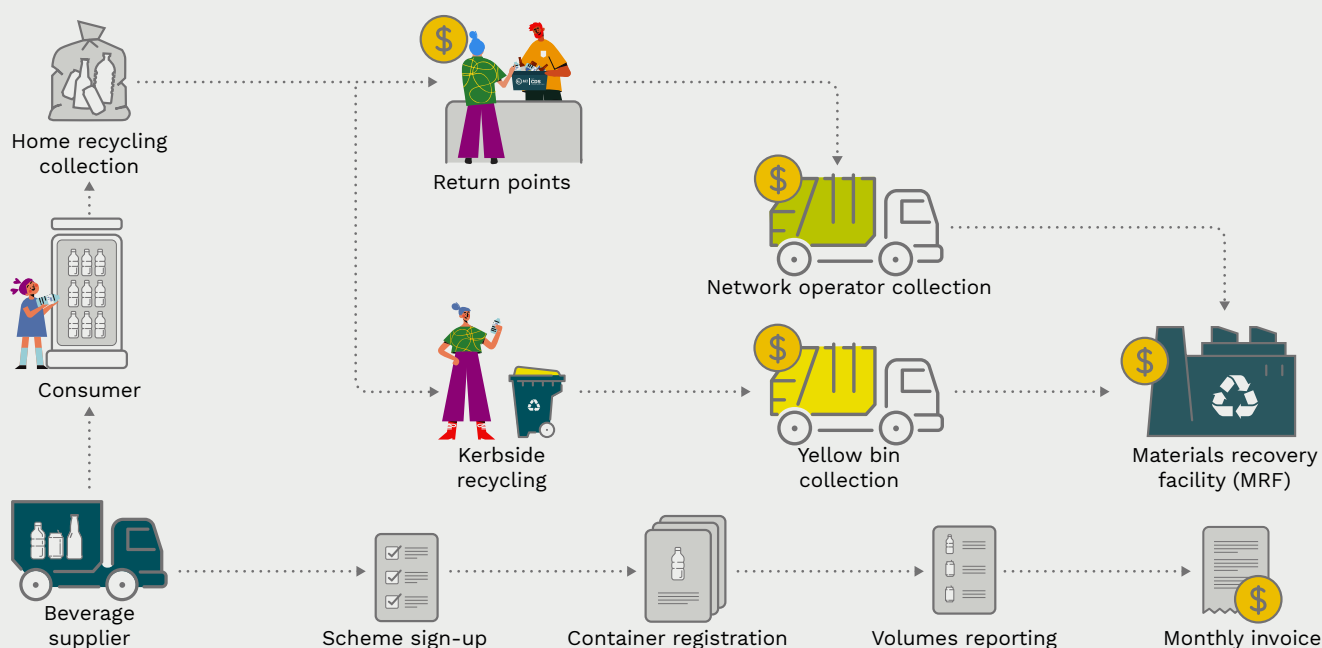
It has been another strong year for the ACT Container Deposit Scheme (CDS), with solid redemption volumes and expansion of the return point network, including the opening of the scheme's first donation station. There has also been a focus on making it easy for the community, charities and schools to participate.

As the financial year closed – and the scheme marked its fifth birthday – awareness, support and trust in the scheme remained high, providing a solid foundation to continue increasing participation.

## How it works

The ACT CDS is based on a self-funding model that rewards and encourages all participants. Individuals, families and community groups take their eligible beverage containers to a return point and receive a 10c refund per container. Beverage suppliers fund the scheme, including the container refunds and scheme operating costs.

The scheme works on a partnership model. The scheme coordinator Exchange for Change (EfC) manages financial operations, marketing and community education, and ensures scheme integrity. Network operator Return-It manages all return points and ensures returned containers are recycled. The ACT Government governs and regulates the scheme to ensure it is operating efficiently.







## CASE STUDY

# FIRST DONATION STATION LAUNCHED AT ANU

**T**he ACT welcomed its first donation station with the installation of an ACT CDS digital smart bin at the Australian National University (ANU), that accepts bottles and cans for donation to charity only.

The smart bin features a barcode scanner that checks if a drink container is eligible for a refund before accepting it. It won't open for an ineligible item, ensuring only drink containers that are eligible for a 10c refund are accepted.

The ANU donation station is the latest in the network of 22 return points across the ACT and it is the only return point where all container

refunds are donated to charity.

The smart bin can hold around 600 containers, with the refunds from donated containers going to support two charities – the ACT Conservation Council and ANU Thrive.

The ACT Conservation Council is a not-for-profit environmental organisation focused on protecting the natural environment and communities. ANU Thrive is a student-led initiative to support student and community development opportunities.

“We know the ACT Container Deposit Scheme is delivering strong benefits to the environment, with less containers ending up in landfill

and instead contributing to a growing local circular economy,” said Danielle Smalley, CEO of Exchange for Change.

“Through initiatives like this donation station and the countless ACT CDS fundraising ‘bottle drives’ happening across Canberra, we know the scheme is also delivering strong social and economic benefits to the community,” she said.

The ANU donation station is located on the first floor of the Marie Reay Teaching Centre. It is in place for an initial six-month trial.

More than 4,500 containers were collected through the donation station in 2022–23. 🌱





ACT  
Government

ACT  
**CDS**  
Container Deposit Scheme

Partnering with  
**RETURN-IT**



Get 10c for each  
drink container

**actcds.com.au**

Made from 100% recycled plastic



## A partnership model



### **Scheme regulator – ACT Government**

The ACT Government's ACT NoWaste is responsible for developing the scheme and managing the obligations and performance of contracts with the scheme coordinator and network operator.



### **Scheme coordinator – Exchange for Change**

EfC is contracted to provide financial management, scheme auditing, fraud identification, verification, community education and marketing services. A key part of the scheme coordinator's role is to manage suppliers and ensure supplier funds are paid into the scheme.



### **Network operator – Return-It**

Return-It is contracted to set up and manage an ACT-wide network of return points. It also manages the logistics and sale of commodities to ensure all containers collected via the network are recycled.

## Other participants

### **First suppliers**

The success of the ACT CDS is in no small part due to beverage suppliers that fund it. Any businesses selling beverages in containers or giving them away as part of a promotion – whether they are manufacturers, distributors, wholesalers or retailers – must enter a supply agreement with EfC and register any eligible containers.

### **Material recovery facility operators**

The Hume material recovery facility (MRF) operator is registered with the ACT Government and can claim processing refunds for eligible containers collected through kerbside recycling bins.

### **Consumers**

The support and participation of the ACT public, community groups and charities – who regularly return their eligible drink containers at a return point in exchange for 10c a container – are essential to the scheme's success.

## Return points in the ACT



As at 30 June 2023



# 6

Drop & Go PODs

Amaroo District Playing Fields  
Charnwood Shopping Centre  
Hawker Shops  
Kambah District Playing Field  
RDOC Gungahlin  
RDOC Tuggeranong



# 9

Drop & Go points

IGA Evatt  
IGA Farrer  
IGA Nicholls  
Salvos Fyshwick  
Salvos Phillip  
Salvos Tuggeranong  
Vinnies Belconnen  
Vinnies Dickson  
Vinnies Tuggeranong



# 4

Cash back depots

Belconnen  
Fyshwick  
Mitchell  
Phillip



# 2

Reverse vending machine (RVM)

Erindale Shopping Centre  
Weston Creek



# 1

Donation station

Australian National University



## Return point types

### Drop & Go PODs

**Self-service and open 7am to 7pm, seven days a week.**

Ideal for smaller number of bags of drink containers. Electronic refund only.

Refund types	Donations
✓ Electronic refund	✓ Yes

### Drop & Go points

**Self-service and staffed. Open during business hours and weekends.**

Ideal for four to five bags of containers at a time. Electronic refund only.

Refund types	Donations
✓ Electronic refund	✓ Yes

### Cash back depots

**Staffed with automated counting systems. Open during business hours and weekends.**

Ideal for larger quantities of containers and instant cash refund. Electronic refund also available.

Refund types	Donations
✓ Cash	✓ Yes
✓ Electronic refund	

### Reverse vending machine

**Self-service and open 7am to 7pm, seven days a week.**

Ideal for returning containers close to home. Electronic refund only.

Refund types	Donations
✓ Electronic refund	✓ Yes

### Donation station

**Self-service and open 7am to 12am, seven days a week.**

Ideal for on-the-go returns – donations only.

Refund types	Donations
✓ Donations only	✓ Yes



## Where does the material go?

The ACT CDS aims to reduce beverage container waste by diverting it from landfill and litter and transforming it into a valuable resource. Beverage containers returned through the network are highly valued as they are source-separated at return points. This results in a clean and recyclable material that is in high demand in Australia and overseas.

Return-It is contractually obliged to ensure all containers collected through return points are recycled.

- 100 per cent of glass collected through the network is reprocessed in NSW to produce new glass bottles and glass packaging products.
- 100 per cent of plastic containers collected through the network are sold and recycled in NSW and Victoria.
- 100 per cent of aluminium collected through the network is baled and sold via local traders to overseas markets for smelting to produce new containers and other products.





A1B2



ACT  
**CDS**  
Central District Services

Participating with  
**RETURN-IT**



Get 10c for each  
drink container

**ACT CDS**

Made from 100% recycled plastic

# Chair's foreword



**Looking back on 2022–23 shows that our commitment to helping build a sustainable future is as strong as ever, with remarkable results for the ACT community and the environment.**

The ACT Container Deposit Scheme (CDS) set a new record for the number of returned containers and expanded its footprint, with the installation of dedicated bins at commercial venues, and a new reverse vending machine at Weston Creek..

In a first for ACT, a donation station was added to the return point network at ANU with refunds from donated containers supporting two charities – the ACT Conservation Council and ANU Thrive, a program for university students. The scheme also partnered with the not-for-profit food rescue service OzHarvest. The collaboration is a natural fit as both our organisations strive to make a zero-waste future a reality.

Personally, I am inspired by how enthusiastically the ACT community has embraced the ACT CDS. After five years of operating, almost two-thirds of adults in the ACT recycle containers through the scheme, with the majority doing so routinely once a month.

“

**In a first for the ACT CDS, a donation station was added to the return point network with refunds from donated containers supporting two charities.**

”

It is also heartwarming to see how different groups are using the scheme to support charities and important causes. Aspen Medical, for example, is working with St Jude's Primary School to raise funds for a partner school in Kenya. Meanwhile, Woden Valley Early Learning Centre is using funds raised from returning containers to help teach children about responsibility and caring for animals.

In a year free from the interruptions we've experienced in the past, our team was able to get out and about to engage with the ACT community to increase understanding of how the scheme operates and how it benefits the community and the environment.

From the Multicultural Festival to the Relay for Life, these events helped us gain valuable insights and answer questions from the ACT public.

In 2023–24, the ACT CDS will enter an exciting phase as the ACT Government concludes its community and stakeholder consultations on expanding the scheme to include a broader range of container types. While it's early days, I am keen to see how the scheme will evolve.

Thank you to all who contribute to the success of the ACT CDS – from the passionate individuals who participate in recycling through the scheme to the dedicated teams working tirelessly behind the scenes. Thank you also to the beverage industry for your support in making the scheme a success.

The Exchange for Change board, our staff and I all look forward to working with our partners – the ACT Government and Return-It – to shape a future where sustainability is top of mind, driving the circular economy.

**Tracy McLeod Howe • Chair  
Exchange for Change**





## CASE STUDY

# INTRODUCING THE ACT CDS RECYCLING HERO PASSPORT



Congratulations to our latest ACT CDS Recycling Heroes.

The ACT CDS Recycling Hero Passport was launched in April 2023 as a fun activity for children to learn about setting goals and saving, and the positive effect they can have by recycling through the scheme.

On receiving their passport, kids are asked to write down what they are saving for – whether it's a toy, an experience or for charity – and how many bottles and cans they need to collect and return to achieve their goal. Each time they open their passport, this reminder helps them to stay focused on the task.

Each passport allows for a target of 1,000 containers or \$100 in container refunds broken down into 50 container milestones. For every 50 bottles and cans recycled, children earn a stamp in their passport.

Once they've reached their goal and collected the final stamp, their photo is taken to recognise they've become a Recycling Hero. Each depot has a fun ACT CDS Instagram frame for them to use, encouraging the kids to share their recycling success and new-found hero status with their family and friends.

After filling their passport with stamps, each child is rewarded with an ACT CDS superhero badge. With each full passport, children earn one of three badges – Enviro Warrior, Recycling Hero and Savings Superstar.

The ACT CDS Recycling Hero Passport also aims to educate children about the broader benefits of recycling. The reverse of the passport features a fun diagram showing what happens to bottles and cans returned through the ACT CDS. A QR code links to the ACT CDS Impact Calculator, which children can use to calculate the environmental benefits from recycling 1,000 containers, including savings in water, energy, and landfill, and reductions in CO<sub>2</sub>.

The passports are available from any ACT CDS cash-back depot. 🌱

# CEO's overview



**It has been an outstanding year for the ACT CDS. Canberrans have shown incredible enthusiasm, returning a record 106.9 million containers. This brings the total number of containers collected since our kick-off in 2018 to a staggering 473.4 million – or more than 960 containers for each person in the ACT.**

This year's primary goal was to motivate more participation by highlighting the remarkable impact of recycling containers through the scheme. One initiative was the ACT CDS Impact Calculator available on our website, which shows participants how the small act of returning containers can lead to significant changes.

Users enter the number of containers they have returned in the calculator and it tells them the savings in water, energy and landfill, as well as carbon emissions avoided. For example, returning 100 containers saves enough energy to power a television for 161 hours. The calculator also shows the collective impact of recycling – 473.4 million containers translates to a reduction in carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) of nearly 66 million kilograms. This is equivalent to taking more than 24,000 cars off the road for a year.

The ACT CDS continues to deliver significant social value to the ACT community with many community groups, schools and sports clubs tapping into the scheme's fundraising potential. Recognising this opportunity, we launched a scheme-wide appeal for donations. Canberrans can now direct their container returns to support OzHarvest, an incredible organisation that rescues food to provide meals for people in need. Returning just 10 containers through the scheme will provide two meals. By the end of FY23, 40,000 containers had been donated, funding 6,677 meals.

Beyond the local impact, we have used the annual report to demonstrate the ACT CDS' global significance by reporting against the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These goals serve as a

global framework for a better world. We're proud that the scheme aligns with six SDGs, highlighting our contribution to addressing critical global issues.

With the ACT CDS now deeply rooted in Canberra's identity, we're looking to the future by instilling responsible consumption and recycling habits from a young age. This year, we continued to provide free educational resources tied to sustainability and recycling for children in Early Learning classes through to Year 6. These resources give educators tools to encourage young people to become environmentally conscious citizens.

We also introduced the Recycling Hero Passport for kids, an initiative that rewards children for recycling while nurturing lifelong habits of environmental awareness. Focusing on the younger generation sets the stage for a future where sustainability is second nature.

While FY23 had its successes, it also had challenges, including a fire at the Hume material recovery facility in December 2022. This facility is integral to the scheme as it processes containers from household bins. Thanks to collaboration between the ACT Government, Exchange for Change, and the material recovery facility operator, the scheme remained resilient and continued to function effectively. By the end of FY23, 220 million containers had gone through this facility.

As FY23 closes, I would like to thank our partners, including the ACT Government, Return-It, the beverage industry and the Exchange for Change Board. Above all, my thanks goes to the people of Canberra for their unwavering support. It's your commitment that's driving positive change and making your community and environment better for generations to come.

**Danielle Smalley • CEO**  
**Exchange for Change**

# Network operator's message



**When reflecting on the 2022-2023 period, it has once again highlighted the incredible resilience of the ACT CDS. In a post-Covid environment, the scheme was able to thrive despite external challenges including the temporary closure of the Hume material recovery facility in December 2022 and persistent wet weather as the tail end of three consecutive La Nina events impacted Canberrans.**

Despite these challenges, I am thrilled to note that once again the residents of the ACT continue to embrace this world-class scheme with increased participation throughout the year resulting in a record 67 million containers being returned through the ACT CDS network of 22 dedicated container refund points.

This year also saw the completion of Return-It's depot renewal project with all cash-back depots now boasting a clean new look with updated signage and branding for both the external and internal components of the depots. A fresh light-filled environment coupled with new layouts has been implemented and is designed to greatly improve the customer experience.

With 89 per cent of participants visiting a container refund point at least once each quarter, it is evident the scheme has been embraced by Canberrans. Return-It's goal to offer greater accessibility for all participants saw the addition of two new return points to the network in the past year. A reverse vending machine located at Weston Creek and a "smart bin" donation station at the Australian National University now offer even more opportunities for Canberrans to return their containers.

Noting that convenience is a critical driver of scheme participation, Return-It has continued to expand the ReCollect mobile collection service to include commercial businesses. ReCollect also provides participants with the option of having containers collected from their homes via the ReCollect app which has been embraced by those in the community with mobility issues or those who cannot store containers at home.

Since the scheme's commencement in 2018, Return-It has become a key part of the fabric of the ACT community. In the past year, we have continued to provide support to other like-minded organisations such as OzHarvest and Aspen Medical to assist in supporting local communities. Our engagement with early childhood learning and local schools is raising awareness of the social and environmental benefits of the scheme and together with a myriad of other fantastic stakeholders, we are as a collective driving greater circular economy outcomes and social benefit for all Canberrans.

As we head into a new and challenging year, I would like to thank our ACT CDS partners at Exchange for Change and the ACT Government for continuing the collaborative and proactive approach that has made the ACT CDS such a great success. I would also like to praise the efforts of all Canberrans for their continued support of the scheme and assure you that Return-It will continue to find innovative and engaging ways to increase accessibility and drive even greater participation for all people in the ACT.

**Marc Churchin**  
CEO, Return-It



# 2022-23 scheme performance overview

## Priorities

We made significant progress in achieving our objectives in 2022-23.



### Priority 1 Customer excellence



### Priority 2 Sustainable operations



### Priority 3 Industry participation

The following sections detail the scheme's achievements in each of these areas.

## 2022-23 scheme highlights



### Priority 1

#### Customer excellence

Delivering a seamless customer experience through public awareness, community engagement and easy access to return points.



**88%**  
awareness<sup>1</sup>



**85%**  
support<sup>1</sup>



**76%**  
trust<sup>1</sup>



**61%**  
participation rate<sup>1</sup>



**84%**  
satisfaction rate<sup>1</sup>



**22**  
return points.<sup>2</sup>

1. Among ACT residents aged 18+, Instinct and Reason June 2023 consumer research.

2. As at 30 June 2023.



### Priority 2

#### Sustainable operations

Ensuring efficient and sustainable delivery of operations for the scheme:



#### SINCE COMMENCEMENT:

**753.5**  
million containers supplied in the ACT<sup>3</sup>



**473.4**  
million containers collected through the scheme



**63%**  
redemption rate of total containers supplied<sup>3</sup>



#### 2022-23 PERIOD:

**153.3**  
million containers supplied in the ACT<sup>3</sup>



**106.9**  
million containers collected through the scheme



**70%**  
annual redemption rate of total containers supplied<sup>3</sup>

3. After adjusting for exports



## Priority 3

### Industry participation

Working together with stakeholders and industry to ensure scheme integrity and safety:



**686**  
supply arrangements  
in force



**\$23m**  
million in supplier  
contributions paid in  
2022–23 (excl GST)



**\$4m**  
million in MRF processing  
refunds paid in 2022–23  
(excl GST)



**0**  
safety incidents





## Year in review

**The ACT CDS finished 2022–23 celebrating its fifth birthday and the ongoing social, economic and environmental benefits it delivers to the ACT. Despite the challenge presented by a major fire at the Hume MRF in December, scheme partners worked closely together to ensure ongoing success. The scheme ended the year with one of the highest redemption rates among such schemes around the country, leaving it well placed to consider expanding its scope of eligible containers in future.**

### From litter to supporting a circular economy

The ACT Government announced in November 2022 that it would consult on expanding the scheme to include more products, such as wine, spirit and cordial bottles, to further reduce waste and increase the number of containers being recycled.

Awareness and support for the scheme is already high, and participation continues to grow. The scheme has a well-established network of return points, and has collected nearly 253 million eligible drink containers for recycling since it began.

Its success provides a strong foundation to consider what's next for the scheme. Consultation formally opened on 30 May, closing in August 2022.

### Strong participation and redemption rates

It was a record year for redemptions through the return point network, with more than 67 million containers collected, resulting in a network redemption rate of 44 per cent, up 5 per cent on the previous year. New records were also set for the number of containers collected in a month and a day through the network, with 6.7 million containers redeemed in May and 367,745 containers returned in just one day.

Contributing to strong network volumes, participation rates remained steady with almost two-thirds of ACT residents (61 per cent) using the scheme during the year.

The year also saw increased engagement with commercial venues and businesses, with collection bin

arrangements developed for sites across the ACT. These included GIO Stadium, Canberra Hospital, Canberra Airport, Questacon, Vikings clubs, five Waves Car Wash sites and 13 Woolworths stores.

While redemption volumes through the network were strong, redemptions via kerbside recycling were affected by the major fire at the Hume MRF in December 2022. The annual overall redemption rate for the scheme finished the year at 70 per cent.

### Making it easier for beverage suppliers

Scheme partners are committed to continual improvement, using regular research and feedback from the community and the waste and beverage industries to identify ways to make it easier to participate in the ACT CDS.

In 2022–23, we responded to beverage supplier feedback that the requirement to provide an annual statutory declaration for the financial year was overly burdensome, particularly for small suppliers. EfC worked closely with the ACT Government to remove this requirement, starting in 2022–23, which was warmly welcomed by beverage suppliers.

### Building trust in scheme outcomes

Members of the ACT community frequently ask what happens to containers collected through the scheme. The answer is simple: all glass and plastic bottles collected through the network are recycled in Australia to create new containers and other products.

The ACT CDS is a great example of the circular economy in action. During 2022–23, EfC worked closely with Return-It to explain what happens to containers to improve understanding and build trust in the scheme and its outcomes. From short-videos showing the bottle-to-bottle process for the three main material types (glass, plastic and aluminium) shown at each of the cash-back depots, to social media content and posters for use at events. By the end of 2022–23, 76 per cent of ACT residents said they trusted the scheme.

EfC launched new tools to raise awareness in the community about the benefits of using the scheme. These included the ACT CDS Impact Calculator, based on an independent life cycle assessment of the scheme, and the Recycling Hero Passport, which encourages children to use the scheme to save for something while also helping the planet.

## New and improved return points

Two new return points were added to the network in 2022–23. A reverse vending machine opened at Weston Creek, close to Cooleman Court Shopping Centre, providing the local community with an automated option for returning their containers. The scheme's first donation station launched with a donations-only machine installed at the Australian National University (ANU).

With its ongoing focus on improving the customer experience, Return-It completed its refresh of all cash-back depots in the ACT. All depots now have a consistent look, with strong scheme branding on the external walls to make them easy to find; new trolleys to make it easier for people to get their containers from their vehicle to a machine; and engaging new signage indoors explains what happens to containers once returned.

At the end of the year, overall customer satisfaction was very high at 84 per cent.

## Supporting the ACT community

The scheme launched its first scheme-wide donation appeal in late 2022–23, partnering with well-known and respected charity OzHarvest, and using the donated refunds from bottles and cans to provide meals to people in need.

The major appeal aims to raise \$50,000 in donated container refunds in 12 months, which equates to providing 100,000 meals to people doing it tough in the ACT. At the end of June, close to 40,000 containers had been donated, funding 6,677 meals.







## CASE STUDY

# WODEN VALLEY TINY TOTS LEARN ABOUT RECYCLING

**T**eaching children about the animal kingdom – while passing on valuable life lessons – is a major part of daily life at Woden Valley Early Learning Centre.

Director Paulina Jagus said that by learning and playing alongside farm and native animals, including ducks, chickens, joeys and reptiles, the children, who range in age from babies to six year olds, develop crucial skills.

“The animals are considered co-workers and teach the children about empathy, impulse control, responsibility and caring for the natural world,” said Paulina.

“When children care for the animals by feeding and cleaning their water troughs and sleeping spaces, they take on the responsibility of caring for another living creature. They learn empathy and respectful sharing of their environment.”

Marissa Corcoran, an educator at the community-based not-for-profit centre, is a wildlife carer. The centre began fundraising through the ACT CDS to support her efforts.

“We decided to collect any containers that could be recycled and donate all the money to Wildcare Queanbeyan,” said Paulina.

Families either bring their containers to the centre to be returned by volunteers or they return them to a collection point and donate the 10c refund. This has created a steady income stream of around \$50 a fortnight that goes towards helping sick or injured wildlife.

“In the past six years of her volunteering, Marissa has helped over 25 orphaned joeys. All the money raised allows volunteers like Marissa to buy formula for the joeys, and bottles and bedding, and pays for any necessary veterinary visits,” said Paulina. ✱



Marissa Corcoran, educator and wildlife carer

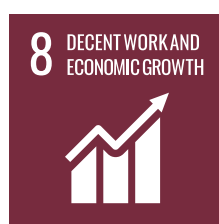


# Our contribution to sustainability



We are excited to report on the ACT CDS sustainability impacts for the first time. Our reporting aligns the scheme's outcomes with the United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The SDGs are a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet, and improve the lives and prospects of everyone, everywhere.

Throughout this report, the SDG icons are used to highlight the work scheme partners are doing to contribute to achieving the UN's goals. The table overleaf summarises the ACT CDS' contributions to the SDGs.

**While we acknowledge the importance of all 17 SDGs, we have prioritised those that closely align to our mission and purpose.**



Goal	Target	Progress
 <p><b>4 QUALITY EDUCATION</b></p> <p>Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.</p>	<p><b>4.7</b> By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development.</p>	<p>The ACT CDS aims to raise awareness about sustainability and educate people on how participating in the scheme can contribute to this goal. It provides valuable information to individuals about the benefits of sustainable practices.</p> <p>In 2022–23, this included launching the ACT CDS Impact Calculator, which allows users to see the positive environmental impacts of participating in the scheme.</p> <p>The ACT CDS also partnered with Cool Australia in 2022–23 to deliver free teaching resources on sustainability and recycling for Early Learning through to Year 6.</p> <p>Reference p26-28</p>
 <p><b>6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION</b></p> <p>Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.</p>	<p><b>6.4</b> By 2030, substantially increase water-use efficiency across all sectors and ensure sustainable withdrawals and supply of fresh water to address water scarcity and substantially reduce the number of people suffering from water scarcity.</p>	<p>The ACT CDS contributes to enhancing water-use efficiency by facilitating the recycling of eligible drink containers.</p> <p>In 2022–23, 67 million drink containers were recycled through the return point network, achieving water savings of more than 510,208,660 litres, equivalent to 204 Olympic swimming pools of water based on the life cycle assessment of the network developed by Lifecycles Australia..</p> <p>Reference p34-35.</p>
 <p><b>8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH</b></p> <p>Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.</p>	<p><b>8.8</b> Protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers, including migrant workers, in particular women migrants, and those in precarious employment.</p>	<p>Scheme partners prioritise compliance with work health and safety, as well as labour laws. They lead by example in striving to create a safe and secure working environment for their staff, contractors and the public.</p> <p>Reference p44.</p>

Goal	Target	Progress
 <p><b>11</b> SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES</p> <p>Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.</p>	<p><b>11.6</b> By 2030, reduce the adverse per capita environmental impact of cities, including by paying special attention to air quality and municipal and other waste management.</p>	<p>By reducing litter, landfill waste and the use of virgin materials, the ACT CDS helps to minimise the environmental impact of human settlements.</p> <p>In 2022–23, 70 per cent of containers suppliers into the ACT were redeemed through the scheme. In all, 106.8 million drink containers were returned through the scheme for recycling (via the return point network and kerbside collection).</p> <p>Reference p32-36.</p>
 <p><b>12</b> RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION</p> <p>Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.</p>	<p><b>12.2</b> By 2030, achieve the sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources.</p> <p><b>12.5</b> By 2030, substantially reduce waste generation through prevention, reduction, recycling and re-use.</p>	<p>The ACT CDS contributes to an emerging domestic circular economy by generating a clean stream of materials for recycling into new drink containers and other products, and reducing the need to rely on virgin materials.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 100 per cent of glass containers collected through the network were reprocessed in NSW into new bottles and jars</li> <li>• 100 per cent of plastic containers were recycled in NSW and VIC into new bottles and other food-grade packaging.</li> <li>• 100 per cent of aluminium cans were exported overseas to be recycled into new products..</li> </ul> <p>Reference p9.</p>



# Priority 1: Customer excellence



**88%**  
awareness<sup>1</sup>



**85%**  
support<sup>1</sup>



**76%**  
trust<sup>1</sup>



**61%**  
participation rate<sup>1</sup>



**84%**  
satisfaction rate<sup>1</sup>



**22**  
return points.<sup>2</sup>

It was a great year for reconnecting with the ACT community, following disruptions during the COVID-19 pandemic that limited promotions and engagement in 2021–22.

In 2022–23, scheme partners resumed community education and promotional activities at full capacity, increasing awareness and support for the scheme to its highest levels. Trust is also high, with three in four ACT residents trusting the ACT CDS, while the participation rate remained steady.

“

Returning containers has become a routine part of life in the ACT, with 89 per cent of scheme participants using the scheme once a quarter or more.

”

1. Among ACT residents aged 18+, Instinct and Reason June 2023 consumer research.

2. As at 30 June 2023.



EfC and Return-It staff celebrate the scheme's birthday at the Mitchell cash-back depot.

## Public education and awareness

2021-22 was a year of disruptions, including an extended pause in advertising due to the pandemic. We were back in action in 2022-23 with a full return to engagement and promotional activities.

Scheme advertising highlighted financial and environmental motivations for participating in the scheme, generating more than 22 million impressions online to maintain high levels of awareness for the scheme among ACT adults. Almost three-quarters of ACT adults recalled scheme advertising in the six months leading up to June 2023.

Helping Canberrans understand how and where to participate was a key strategy throughout the year to increase participation. 'How to participate' advertising drove visitors to the ACT CDS website for information on container eligibility and return points. To support these campaigns, we refreshed the website with simplified messages and a consistent look and feel, ensuring that people connect the information they see in advertising, on our website and at return points.

Consumer research found that while the 10c refund is the primary motivator for most participants (69 per cent), a quarter used the scheme as a source of pocket

money – and to encourage positive recycling habits – for children or grandchildren.

We launched the ACT CDS Recycling Hero Passport during the April 2023 school holidays to support families trying to teach kids about recycling, setting goals and saving money. The passports were extremely popular with hundreds of children (and adults), who used it to track their participation in the scheme.

### Building trust in the scheme

Maintaining high levels of trust in the recycling outcomes of the ACT CDS is key to increasing participation and then ensuring participation becomes sustained behaviour change. During National Recycling Week in November 2022, we launched new tools highlighting the positive impact the scheme is having on the environment.

We refreshed the ACT CDS website homepage, which now features a dashboard with the ACT CDS' latest key performance indicators. These include total containers returned through the network, total containers returned through kerbside collection, the 12-month rolling redemption rate, the number of return points and the latest consumer support, participation and satisfaction rates. The dashboard makes the scheme's performance more transparent for the ACT community and key stakeholders, such as environmental organisations, beverage industry and community groups.

The new-look homepage also highlights the ACT community's contribution to the scheme's significant environmental outcomes by linking to the new ACT CDS Impact Calculator.

The calculator aims to make it easy for people to understand the positive individual and collective effects of participating in the scheme. It helps to reinforce habitual recycling behaviour by highlighting the impact of regularly returning even just a few containers. The calculator also increases word-of-mouth marketing through the sharing of results with friends and family.

EfC commissioned Lifecycles Australia to conduct the life cycle assessment of the ACT return point network based on four years of scheme data. This data included all aspects, ranging from the energy required to operate return points to the fuel trucks consumed collecting the containers from a return point and transporting them to a recycler. It also considered all aspects of a container's life cycle, from purchase to return to being recycled.

The report and calculations formed the basis of the ACT CDS Impact Calculator. Consumers are invited to visit the ACT CDS website, click on the calculator and enter the number of containers they have taken to their local return point. It then calculates the impact of their return, including water, energy and landfill savings, and carbon emissions avoided. They can multiply their impact using a slide toggle to see the effect of everyone in the ACT returning the same number of containers, and download a certificate or share their impact on social media.

The calculator was expanded later in the year to accommodate the larger volumes of containers returned by schools, businesses, charities and community groups, so they can share the positive environmental impact of their fundraising efforts through the scheme.

To dispel myths about what happens to containers deposited at return points, EfC worked with Return-It to develop a suite of videos, posters and social media content highlighting the entire journey of a bottle or can – from being purchased, consumed, returned through the ACT CDS, recycled into a new container and being back on the shelf ready to be sold to start the cycle again. These journeys were developed for the three main types of material redeemed through the scheme – plastic bottles, glass bottles and aluminium cans.

The videos are available on all ACT CDS digital channels and at all cash-back depots. The posters are used at community events and information sessions, helping assure scheme users that all containers returned through the network are recycled, with the majority ending up as new containers.



## CASE STUDY

# TOY KOALA HELPS SCHOOL STUDENTS RECYCLE

**W**illiam the Waste-free Warrior is encouraging kids at Harrison School to recycle via the ACT CDS. The toy koala is awarded to the group of students producing the least amount of rubbish from their lunch packaging.

**“Waste-free Wednesday is mostly about getting kids to think about what’s in their lunchbox,” said Year 1–2 teacher Shane Newman.**

**“I’ve made it a competition between classes and groups to make it a bit more fun,” he said.**

**Harrison School has a range of sustainability initiatives and one of the most popular is recycling through the ACT CDS. Shane and Year 3–4 teacher Sam MacKenzie lead the container collections.**

**“It started three years ago in just one class and the 10c container refunds went towards an excursion to the movies.**



The sustainability team oversees ACT CDS container recycling at Harrison School, ACT.



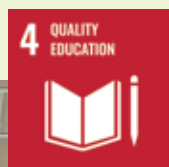
Then the recycling spread to other classes and the funds went towards buying computers,” Shane said. It wasn’t long before students throughout the school were saving their bottles and cans to recycle. A sustainability team formed and the school approached Bunnings for dedicated container recycling bins.

Sam links the scheme to classroom learning. Her students completed a waste audit at school to assess how much landfill was being created. Next, they explored how they could improve sustainability at school.

“The students were really shocked by the amount of rubbish that was generated. Kids talked about the recycling they did at home and how we could use the same ideas at the school. They also realised that there were no bins for eligible containers in the playground, so we changed that,” Sam said.

The school has raised around \$500 through container refunds and there has been lots of suggestions from the students about how to use the money raised.

“The money might go toward a worm farm and bins for the playground. It would be nice to tie it into waste reduction,” said Shane. ✨



## Connecting with the ACT community

EfC, Return-It and ACT NoWaste worked together to host information stalls and attend community events, engaging one-on-one with community members. These events included the Schools' Climate Action Conference, National Multicultural Festival, ACT Sustainable Business Expo, Floriade, Craft Beer and Cider Festival, and ACT Relay for Life. These events provided an opportunity to connect with the ACT community, answer questions, explain why and how to participate, and encourage people to give it a go.

We also hosted family days at the Belconnen and Mitchell cash-back depots, allowing participants to connect with Return-It and EfC staff while enjoying a free coffee and cookie. ACT CDS reusable bags were handed out to make it easy for people to collect their containers and bring them to a return point.

## Improvements to the network

During 2022–23, Return-It finished renovating the cash-back depots. The refresh included new look interiors and exteriors with stronger ACT CDS branding, improved signage and a new layout that makes it easier for customers to return their containers.

Return-It added two new return points to the network, including a second reverse vending machine, located at Weston Creek, and the donation station at ANU.

ReCollect, the mobile collection service operated by Return-It, expanded its operation from two to three collection days a week, and stepped up its collections from commercial businesses. These include well-known venues such as GIO Stadium, Waves Carwash sites, Canberra Hospital, Canberra Airport, Questacon, and Viking Clubs, which have all implemented ACT CDS on-site collections.

The two reverse vending machines were updated to accept all containers through each chute, making it easier for people to participate. Previously, visitors had to separate their items and line up twice – once for glass and a second time for cans and plastic bottles.

Return-It's efforts to improve the customer experience contributed to very high levels of customer satisfaction, which was at 84 per cent by June 2023.

## Supporting community

### Encouraging school participation

In 2022–23, we marked the second year of our three-year partnership with Cool Australia. This partnership has helped us to connect with ACT schools, circulating newsletters and social media posts on the benefits of participating in the ACT CDS as well as providing links to the curriculum-aligned ACT CDS school resources developed in the first year of the partnership.

Since launching in July 2021, the ACT CDS school resources have been downloaded 1,985 times by 573 teachers Australia-wide. Cool Australia estimate that approximately 76,000 school students have been engaged with the resources to date.

A survey of ACT schools found 48 per cent had participated in the ACT CDS. Among those participating, 77 per cent had implemented an ongoing drink container collection system on site and 15 per cent had incorporated the ACT CDS into classroom lessons.

EfC attended the ACT Government's Schools' Climate Action Conference, which was a great opportunity to connect with students from Year 10 to Year 12 who are

passionate about sustainability and environmental protection. Discussions with students and teachers ranged from the scheme's environmental benefits to what happens to containers and how to fundraise.



### Supporting charities and community groups

The ACT CDS is an ever-growing fundraising channel for community groups and charities. EfC continued to provide free resources, tips and inspiring case studies in a fundraising toolkit to make it easier for groups and charities to get started.

Late in 2022–23, we launched our first scheme-wide appeal in partnership with OzHarvest. A pilot running over 12 months, the appeal aims to raise \$50,000 in donated container refunds to fund 100,000 meals for people in need in the ACT.

At the end of June, close to 40,000 containers had been donated, funding 6,677 meals.



EfC and Return-It staff engage with visitors and promote on-site container recycling at the Canberra Beer & Cider Festival.

# Priority 2: Sustainable operations



## IN 2022–23



**153.3**  
million containers  
supplied in the ACT<sup>1</sup>



**106.9**  
million containers  
collected through the  
scheme

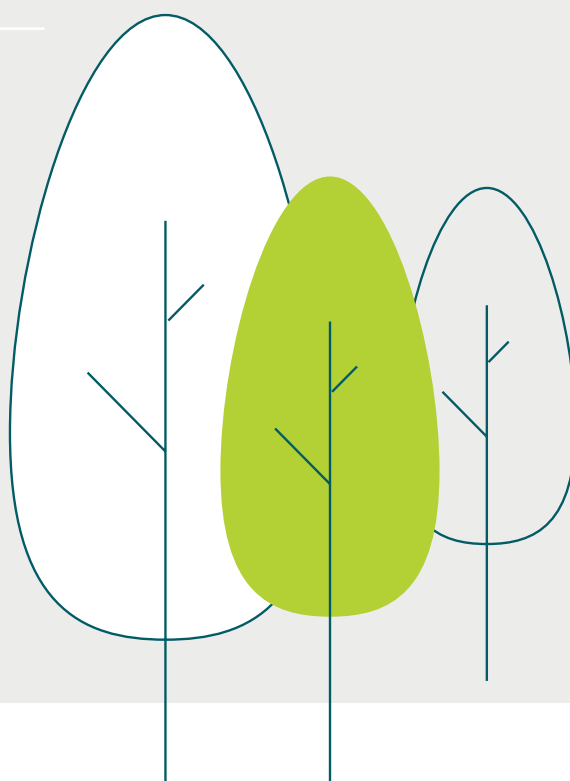


**70%**  
annual redemption  
rate of total containers  
supplied<sup>1</sup>

The redemption rate continued to be strong in the ACT in 2022–23, despite a fire at the Hume MRF in December 2022 affecting redemptions via kerbside recycling. This year, the overall redemption rate was 70 per cent, down 5 percentage points on the previous year, largely due to the fire.

The network had a record year, with an incredible 67.3 million containers redeemed by the community. This represented a 17 per cent increase on last year. When combined with kerbside collections, a total of 106.9 million containers were redeemed for recycling in the ACT in 2022–23.

1. After adjusting for exports





# Supplier contributions

During 2022–23, fixed pricing per material type continued following the transition to the simplified supplier contributions approach in 2021–22.

When the scheme transitioned, pricing was set for an initial six-month period from the February 2022 invoice to July 2022 invoice. The economic uncertainty created by COVID-19 meant that in the next period, EfC maintained existing prices for a further six months, through to the January 2023 invoice. The easing of economic uncertainty led to the announcement in October 2022 of a new 12-month fixed price per material type with effect from the February 2023 invoice to the January 2024 invoice.

## Does the ACT CDS make a profit?

No, the scheme operates under a cost-recovery methodology and doesn’t make a profit. Supplier contributions cover the expected scheme operating costs, with any surplus funds reducing future costs.

Supplier contributions cover the core scheme costs, which include, but are not limited to:

- **refunds** – 10c (including GST) per container, paid to the network operator and passed on to consumers
- **network fees** – paid to the network operator (Return-It) per container collected, based on the material type
- **MRF refunds** – 10c (including GST), paid to MRF operators for each container collected through kerbside recycling
- **export rebates** – to refund suppliers for beverage containers exported from the ACT
- **a fixed scheme coordinator fee** – for services and administration carried out by the scheme coordinator
- **a fixed marketing fee** – for marketing of the scheme performed by the scheme coordinator
- **a fixed scheme compliance fee** – paid to the ACT Government to cover management, administration and operation of the scheme.

## Scheme pricing in 2022–23

Table 1: Actual pricing summary by material type

Container material type	Average price per container 2022–23 (cents)	Minimum price per container charged (cents)	Maximum price per container charged (cents)
Aluminium	14.17	14.11	14.23
Glass	13.84	13.72	13.95
HDPE	7.05	6.10	8.00
PET	10.51	10.25	10.76
LPB	4.74	4.55	4.92
Steel	3.08	2.46	3.69
Other plastics	1.54	1.39	1.69
Other materials	1.53	1.43	1.63
Weighted average price per container*	12.10	11.96	12.23

Note: prices are based on reported volumes at the time the August 2023 invoice was generated  
Prices are in cents, excluding GST.\* Calculated by applying the monthly set prices to actual volumes divided by total volume for the year.



## Supplier volumes

The ACT acts as a distribution hub for the supply of eligible beverage containers in the ACT and surrounding parts of NSW. To ensure that containers are only subject to a container deposit or refund in the jurisdiction where they are finally consumed, an export protocol provides rebates to businesses that purchase containers within the ACT and then supplies them into another jurisdiction.

Supply volumes in 2022–23 increased 3 per cent compared to the previous year. This was partially driven by a consumer shift to smaller packs, resulting in more containers for a similar sales volume, and an increase in sales in the first quarter compared to low volumes at the same time the previous year when COVID-19 affected the supply chain.

Aluminium, PET and glass were the most common material types, collectively making up 91 per cent of all containers supplied into the ACT after adjusting for exports. Aluminium volumes grew 3 per cent compared to the prior year, and PET grew 16 per cent. This was at the expense of glass, which declined by 10 per cent compared to the previous year.

## Supply volumes

**Table 2: Actual supplier volumes net of exports 2022–23**

Container material type	Total	Volume share (%)*
Aluminium	62,544,992	40.80
PET	46,031,488	30.03
Glass	31,310,221	20.42
LPB	10,163,798	6.63
HDPE	2,629,872	1.72
Other materials	308,682	0.20
Steel	253,342	0.17
Other plastics	62,435	0.04
<b>Total</b>	<b>153,304,830</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Note: volumes are based on reported volumes at the time the August 2023 invoice was generated

“

Aluminium, PET and glass were the most common material types, collectively making up 91 per cent of all containers supplied into the ACT.

”

## Scheme redemptions

During 2022–23, total redemption volume declined by 3.9 million containers compared to 2021–22. The average redemption rate of 70 per cent was 5 percentage points lower than in 2021–22, driven by lower volumes redeemed via kerbside recycling. The effect of the fire at the Hume MRF caused some disruption to operations for the scheme.

Network redemptions accounted for 67.3 million containers, while 39.5 million containers were redeemed via kerbside recycling out of total redemptions of 106.9 million containers in 2022–23. Total number of containers redeemed declined by 4 per cent compared to the previous year, driven by the disruption with the MRF fire.

The 17 per cent growth in network redemptions this year was offset by the 26 per cent decline in MRF redemptions, resulting in the channel mix changing from an even split in 2021–22 to 63 per cent collected via the network in 2022–23.

Aluminium, PET and glass were the top three material types, accounting for 96 per cent of redeemed containers.

“

Aluminium, PET and glass were the top three material types, accounting for 96 per cent of redeemed containers.

”



## Total scheme containers redeemed

**Table 3: Total scheme containers collected through the network and material recovery facilities, 2022–23**

Container material type	Net supply volume	Redeemed volume	Redemption rate (%)*
Aluminium	62,544,992	51,025,751	82
HDPE	2,629,872	2,287,123	87
Glass	31,310,221	21,495,669	69
PET	46,031,488	29,946,462	65
LPB	10,163,798	2,087,408	21
Steel	253,342	18,387	7
Other plastics	62,435	0	0
Other materials	308,682	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>153,304,830</b>	<b>106,860,800</b>	<b>70</b>

Note: redemption rates are based on the supplier volumes reported in Table 2

\*Redemption rates have been rounded to the nearest whole per cent.





## CASE STUDY

# CYCLING AND SUSTAINABILITY WITH ACT'S VIKINGS

**V**ikings Cycling Club event organiser Jon Lowe was already carting away cans for recycling after the club's weekly races when the ACT CDS launched.

The club holds a range of events and regular rides, such as Thursday night races, when riders meet at Stromlo Forest Park. Each competitor receives a can of drink, and it's up to the club to ensure all rubbish is removed after each event.

"It seemed easy to just put the cans aside and drop them off at a return point in a batch every six months," Jon said.

"We just put out a box each week, and the empties from the race go into it. We have a few people who supply a few containers on the side, and some of my work colleagues also bring me their empties each week."

Jon added that he decided to donate the money raised through the 10c refunds to Hartley Lifecare. "It didn't feel right to keep the money myself, and there would be paperwork to funnel it back through the club's books, so I decided it should go to charity."

Hartley Lifecare provides supported accommodation for

people living with disabilities, their families and carers. The not-for-profit organisation runs an annual cycling challenge as one of its major fundraisers.

"Many of our riders have ridden the Hartley Cycle Challenge in the past, and it feels nice to be able to continue to help, even with just a small amount," Jon said.

With riders of all ages and abilities welcome at the club, it's a great way to show that everyone can make a difference and every little bit helps. 🌱



The Vikings run weekly rides on Sundays.

## Network trends

It was a record year for the number of containers collected through the network, with 10 million (17 per cent) more containers collected compared to the previous year, which was affected by restrictions relating to COVID-19. The network achieved a redemption rate of 44 per cent, growing 5 percentage points compared to the previous year.

Volume growth was spread across the different types of return points. Volume through cash-back depots was up 21 per cent compared to last year, while volume through reverse vending machines doubled. This was partly due

to the opening of ACT's second reverse vending machine in Weston Creek. Drop & Go Pods saw a 7 per cent increase, which was offset by a decline through Drop & Go Points.

Consistent with prior years, the most highly redeemed material types were aluminium, glass and PET, accounting for 95 per cent of all network containers redeemed. Redemption of aluminium and PET grew compared to last year, while glass declined.



### Network trends

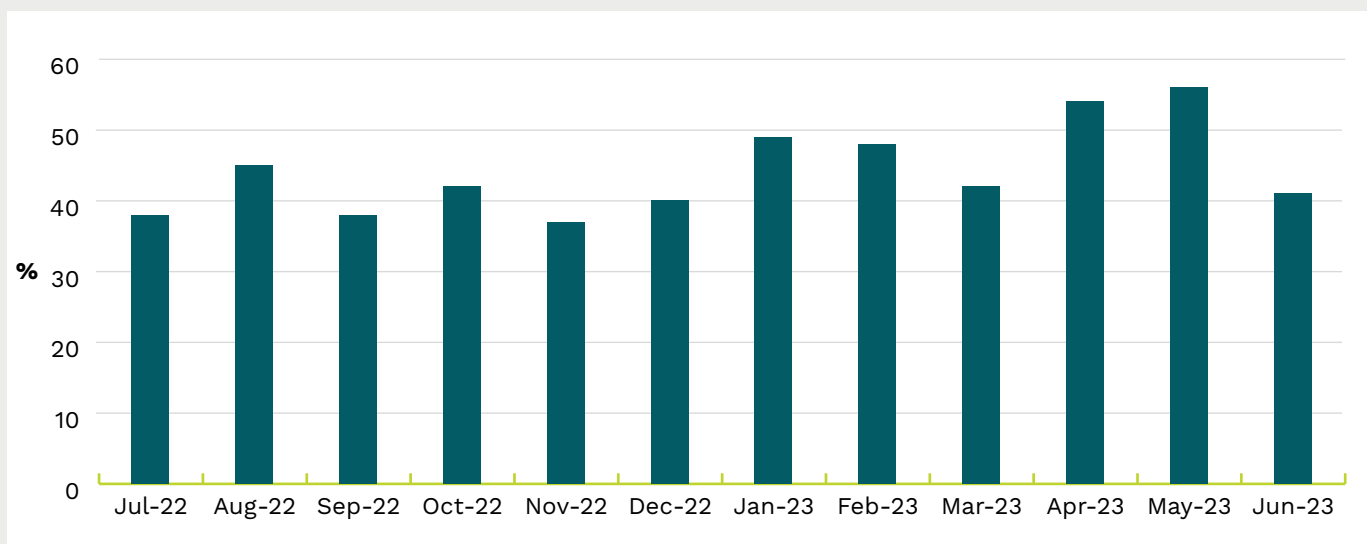
**Table 4: Total number of containers collected through return points, 2022–23**

Container material type	Net supply volume	Containers collected through network	Redemption rate (%)*
Aluminium	62,544,992	35,002,954	56
Glass	31,310,221	13,313,781	43
HDPE	2,629,872	974,096	37
PET	46,031,488	15,915,469	35
LPB	10,163,798	2,087,408	21
Steel	253,342	18,387	7
Other plastics	62,435	0	0
Other materials	308,682	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>153,304,830</b>	<b>67,312,095</b>	<b>44</b>

Note: redemption rates are based on the supplier volumes reported in Table 2

\*Redemption rates have been rounded to the nearest whole per cent.

**Graph 1: Return-It's monthly redemption performance, 2022–23**





## CASE STUDY

# ACT LOCAL LAUNCHES RECYCLING MICRO-BUSINESS

**A**CT local Ryan Gilligan has been passionate about recycling since he was young. When he graduated from school in December 2020, he couldn't find a job so his mum and his National Disability Insurance Scheme support mentors helped him set up his own container recycling micro-business – RecycleAbilities.

**“Ryan aspires to full-time employment like his brothers and he wanted to be out and about working for his community,”** said Corinna, his mother.

With support from his friends and family, Ryan realised he could combine his enthusiasm for recycling and his love of order and sorting.

**“Ryan and his circle came up with the idea of offering a drink container pick-up service for local individuals and companies,”** said Corinna.

**“Ryan loved the idea and got right into it. He started by collecting from family, friends and neighbours.”**

RecycleAbilities now collects bottles and cans from more than 40 locations, three days a week. Ryan returns the containers through the ACT CDS for a 10c refund for each.



Ryan Gilligan

**“When he started, he was transporting containers in the back of my car or his mentors’ cars. Now he has a little white van with RecycleAbilities magnets on the side panels,”** said Corinna.

Sorting the containers at his local cash-back depot is Ryan's favourite part of the process. The depot staff make him feel welcome. Ryan is mostly non-verbal, but he often says ‘Return-

**It depot – I love it!’**

**“He puts on his noise-cancelling headphones and methodically works through the sacks of containers. His mentors assist him, and create a bridge between him and other people, enabling Ryan to showcase his many talents and skills, and facilitate the odd conversation,”** she added.

In the last two years, the micro-business has recycled 218,294 containers through the ACT CDS. From the funds raised, Ryan has donated \$6,680 to various charities, including ACT Wildlife, ACT RSPCA, OzHarvest, Foodbank Australia, Oxfam Australia, Care International's Ukraine campaign, The Fred Hollows Foundation and Room to Read Australasia. The container refunds have also helped cover his set-up and running expenses.

**“Ryan is a happy and motivated young man with a valued role in his community. He loves what he does and feels like he has a purpose in life. And the ACT Container Deposit Scheme has enabled him to work towards financial independence,”** his mum said. ✨

## Environmental impact of network redemptions

Using the life cycle assessment of the network undertaken by Lifecycles Australia, the environmental benefits of the volume of containers returned through the network to-date are:

**CO<sub>2</sub> emissions avoided equivalent to:**

**SINCE COMMENCEMENT**

**13,576**

cars off the road for a year

**2022-23**

**3,613**

cars off the road for a year

**Energy savings equivalent to:**

**SINCE COMMENCEMENT**

**3,135**

households total yearly energy consumption

**2022-23**

**835**

households total yearly energy consumption

**Water savings equivalent to:**

**SINCE COMMENCEMENT**

**676**

Olympic swimming pools

**2022-23**

**180**

Olympic swimming pools





# Materials recovery facility trends

A total of 39.5 million containers were redeemed in 2022–23 compared to 53.5 million in 2021–22, a drop of 14 million containers, largely driven by the impact of the fire that destroyed the Hume MRF on 26 December 2022.

The year saw a change in the mix of material types redeemed via the MRF, with growth in PET (from 23 per cent to 36 per cent) while glass declined (from 35 per cent to 21 per cent). Aluminum improved slightly by 1 per cent.



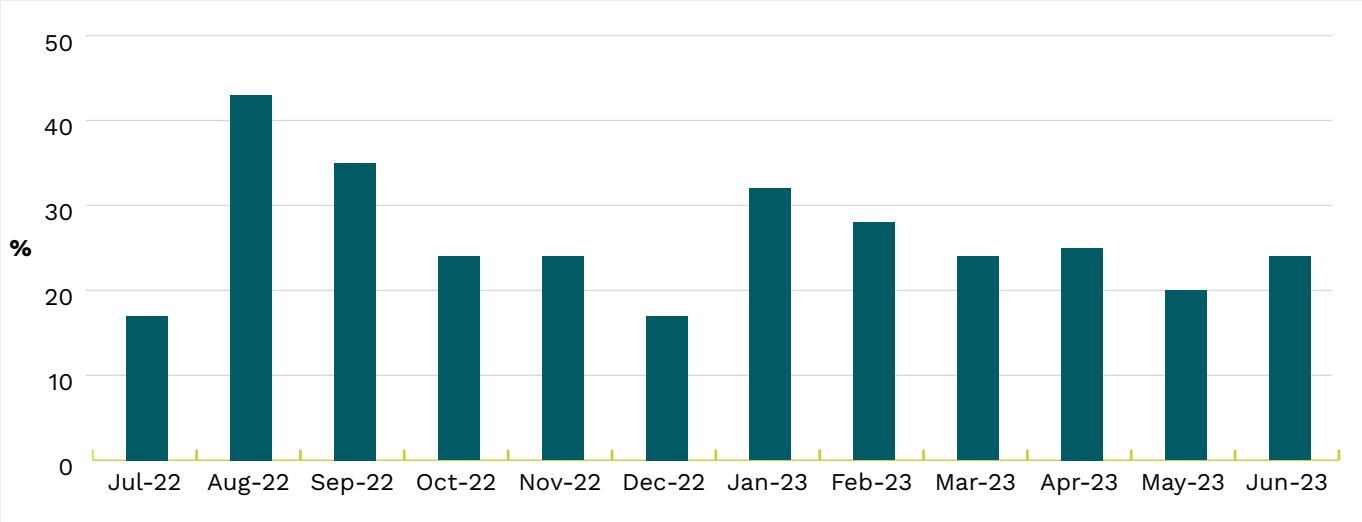
## Materials recovery facility trends

Table 5: Material recovery facility operator container redemptions, 2022–23

Container material type	Net supply volume	Total containers redeemed through MRF	Redemption rate (%)*
HDPE	2,629,872	1,313,027	50
PET	46,031,488	14,030,992	30
Aluminium	62,544,992	16,022,797	26
Glass	31,310,221	8,181,887	26
LPB	10,163,798	0	0
Steel	253,342	0	0
Other plastics	62,435	0	0
Other materials	308,682	0	0
Total	153,304,830	39,548,703	26

Note: redemption rates are based on the supplier volumes reported in Table 2  
\*Redemption rates have been rounded to the nearest whole cent.

Graph 2: Material recovery facility redemptions and claim eligibility 2022–23



The scheme does not recognise containers recovered through kerbside recycling until they are delivered for reuse or recycling. This creates a timing difference between when the material is collected and processed and when it is recognised and reported by the scheme.



## CASE STUDY

## SAVING FOR THE FUTURE THROUGH RECYCLING

**A**CT local Simone Wright and her five-year-old son, Dane, have been collecting drink containers from around the Gungahlin area to recycle through the ACT CDS and top up his bank account.

“We started collecting as Dane was interested in earning money. I wasn’t keen to give him pocket money for doing tasks around the home because I want him to do them without being rewarded, so we thought of collecting containers,” she said.

“We live across from Yerrabi Pond recreation area and do a regular sweep of the park to pick up containers left behind. Dane said he likes collecting the ‘10 cents’ as it will make him rich.”

When they began collecting more than a year ago, Simone set a target to return 10,000 containers in 12 months,

with the \$1,000 in refunds going to her son’s savings. Once they have a few bags of eligible bottles, cartons and cans, they take them to the Mitchell cash-back depot to redeem, and Simone then deposits the refund in a savings account.

Simone was surprised they met her \$1,000 target in a year. She’s now working towards another \$1,000 this year and is confident they’ll reach it again.

“I have had help from my very generous neighbours in our apartment building who set aside their drink containers for us. I’m very humbled and grateful for their contribution. It would have taken longer to reach my goal without it,” she said.

“The staff at the cash-back depot are so friendly and helpful, and the facilities are great,” Simone said. 🌱



Dane and Simone Wright



# Priority 3: Industry participation



**686**  
supply arrangements  
in force



**\$23**  
million in supplier  
contributions paid in  
2022–23 (excl GST)



**\$4**  
million in MRF processing  
refunds paid in 2022–23  
(excl GST)



**0**  
safety incidents

**Making it easier for beverage suppliers to participate in the ACT scheme was a key focus of activities including the removal of the requirement for suppliers to provide statutory declarations.**

EfC remained committed to maintaining confidence in the ACT scheme by further strengthening governance and risk management practices and ensuring compliance. This included supporting Return-It as it launched two new return points during the year; addressing any audit, risk or governance concerns; and enhancing fraud and corruption controls through a program aimed at improving risk management and assurance across the entire scheme.

Supplier reporting compliance was a focus, resulting in more than 18,000 additional containers being reported. We worked with scheme partners to identify unregistered suppliers and unapproved containers.





## Suppliers and exporters

### Funding the scheme

First suppliers of beverages into the ACT cover the ongoing costs of managing, administering and operating the ACT CDS. During the reporting period, 686 supply arrangements were in force (15 suppliers left the scheme). Since the scheme's commencement, 709 supplier arrangements have been made. Suppliers collectively paid \$23 million in contributions in 2022–23 (excluding GST).

### Audit

EfC administers the first supplier and exporter audit program and engages the services of independent auditor PKF Australia to ensure audits and associated activities are impartial and independent from EfC and its shareholders. The audits verify the accuracy of supplier-reported volumes and ensure suppliers make the correct contributions to the scheme.

A risk-based approach to audits is taken, whereby large-volume suppliers are audited each year. The remaining low-volume suppliers are audited less frequently. This approach ensures confidence in the assurance of the total volume of supply into the ACT. PKF Australia supplies EfC with a quarterly audit report containing any findings. We use this to follow up with suppliers and exporters to ensure any discrepancies between supplier-reported volumes and the PKF Australia audit results are corrected.

During the reporting period, PKF Australia conducted 32 supplier audits involving more than 159 million supplied containers, and one exporter audit of more than 27 million exported containers.

No serious or material non-compliance notices were issued over the reporting period. Immaterial errors identified in supplier reporting were caused by human error, ineffective systems and process controls, or a lack of understanding of the scheme following staff turnover. Where non-compliance occurred, EfC worked with the supplier to improve its understanding and ensure accurate reporting of volumes in the future.

EfC continued to work with the NSW, Queensland and Western Australian container deposit schemes to harmonise many first supplier audits across these jurisdictions. This activity reduced the audit burden on suppliers while increasing assurance outcomes.

### Supplier compliance

In 2022–23, EfC initiated a targeted campaign to address non-reporting suppliers. The campaign resulted in an additional 18,221 containers being reported.

In collaboration with NoWaste and Return-It, EfC proactively identifies first suppliers of eligible containers, and supports them through the registration, container approval and reporting processes.

## Supplier and exporter satisfaction

EfC is committed to working with industry and government to identify ways to continually improve and implement strategies that streamline processes, enabling suppliers to easily meet their obligations.

Following feedback from suppliers that the requirement to provide an annual statutory declaration was burdensome, particularly for small suppliers, EfC worked with the ACT Government to remove it.

Changes made in 2021–22 to consolidate the sign-up forms for the NSW and ACT schemes, and improve the reporting portal, have resulted in fewer requests from suppliers for assistance. In 2022–23, EfC managed and resolved 254 supplier and exporter enquiries and support requests, a 37 per cent decrease from the prior year. The main subjects of enquiries were general

scheme and supply enquiries, portal administration support requests, and container approval enquiries. The team has maintained a first-contact resolution rate of 91 per cent, and 94 per cent of enquiries were resolved within three days.

## Export rebates

Some businesses buy eligible CDS containers within the ACT and sell or supply the containers to another business outside the jurisdiction. These businesses are treated as exporters within the scheme and can claim a rebate for these containers.

During the reporting period, 15 executed Exporter Deed Polls were in force, of which three made exporter claims totalling \$3.8 million (excluding GST) in rebates in 2022–23.





## CASE STUDY

## TEAMING UP TO HELP CHILDREN IN NEED

**M**aricel Giorgioni teams up with her colleagues at Aspen Medical and with local schools to collect and return drink containers to support a range of not-for-profit organisations.

“The ACT CDS covers multiple social impacts I believe in. It increases awareness about climate change and encourages others, particularly children, to recycle and at the same time support others who are in need,” she said.

“Colleagues at Aspen Medical bring their containers to the office, and once the container returns bin is full, I take it to an ACT CDS return point and donate the proceeds to a charity. Aspen Medical has a program where it matches a certain amount of what I donate from collecting bottles.

“So far, I have collected 36,139 bottles and donated \$3,613.90. At the moment, it’s challenging because many people work from home. I send out emails to keep people updated on how many bottles and cans we have collected and how much we’ve raised for charity.”

Currently, Maricel is donating funds raised to Global School Partners, a small charity that supports children and teachers in Africa.

Kathy Laudenbach, a teacher at St Jude’s Primary School, works with Maricel to organise container collections at the school.

The Year 5 students work hard to educate and encourage their peers. “We had a number of assemblies where the Year 5 children spoke about the scheme and how the money we raise does so much for our partner school in Kenya,” she said.

The container collections have also become part of her teaching. “We talk about the impact all these containers

have on the environment and our responsibility as global citizens to reduce landfill as part of our Science, Religion, and Business and Economics programs,” Kathy said.

“It’s a good activity for the students to learn about recycling and to reach out to other children in need,” added Maricel. ✱



Two students from St Jude's Primary School ensure their containers are collected for recycling through the ACT CDS.

## Material Recovery Facility operator

### Processing refunds

The ACT MRF operator ReCycle is entitled to claim processing refunds for eligible containers collected through kerbside recycling bins.

The MRF is paid a processing refund of 10c (including GST) for each container delivered for reuse or recycling. A ‘container factor’ is used to convert container weights into a count that is calculated based on independent sampling data collected at the kerbside for glass and

from the MRF output streams for all other material types. The factors are published on the EfC website.

EfC paid a total of \$4 million (excluding GST) in processing refunds to ReCycle in 2022–23 for three quarters as the claim for the fourth quarter of the year has not been finalised at the time of writing.

EfC conducts audits to track the large volumes of kerbside, commercial and network operator materials that are processed through the facility. EfC audits claim and related source data quarterly to validate claims before processing the refund, and to detect, manage and mitigate the risk of fraud and corruption.

No serious or material non-compliance notices were issued during the year.



## Network operator

### Network payments

Return-It operates the return point network in the ACT and manages the logistics and sale of commodities to ensure all collected containers are delivered to a recycler. EfC administers the payments to Return-It, ensuring they are based on the total volume of eligible containers collected through the network. A total of \$6.5 million (excluding GST) in network payments were paid in 2022–23.

EfC's audit program validates the volume of containers claimed throughout the year – including the total volumes collected, counted and delivered for reuse or recycling – and Return-It's financial records to substantiate claims.

No serious or material non-compliance notices were issued over the course of the year.

### Return points

EfC undertook data monitoring and analytics of return points throughout the year, in alignment with the ACT Government-approved audit plan. Onsite inspections were conducted only if a specific risk was identified.

No serious or material non-compliance notices were issued in 2022–23.

## Governance

Good governance and risk management are essential to delivering on the scheme's purpose and objectives. This maintains integrity and confidence in the scheme; fulfills corporate governance, legislative and contractual obligations; and ensures the scheme's continued success.

EfC remained committed to establishing robust governance and risk management frameworks. These encompass appropriate policies, systems and processes, effectively meeting the expectations of the community, industry and regulators. EfC reported zero performance failures and zero safety incidents in the reporting period.

### Risk and assurance

#### Risk and assurance approach

A key element of governance for the ACT CDS is the scheme's risk and assurance program. EfC is responsible for coordinating this in partnership with ACT NoWaste, Return-It and the independent scheme auditor (RSM Australia).

This risk and assurance program is the primary mechanism for:

- identifying, monitoring and managing risks that may affect the scheme's ongoing success, emphasising minimisation of the risk of fraud and corruption
- maintaining scheme partner and participant compliance with the Waste Management and Resource Recovery Act 2016 (ACT) and other associated legislative, regulatory and contractual instruments
- validating and assuring the significant volumes of materials and funds that flow through the scheme.

In 2022–23, EfC conducted regular workshops with NoWaste and Return-It to monitor and manage scheme risks.







### Audit and assurance

EfC undertook audit and assurance activities throughout the year, in accordance with the ACT Government-approved audit plan. EfC maintained 100 per cent compliance with this plan and there were zero performance failures during the year.

EfC removed the use of the interim audit plan that was implemented in response to COVID-19 in 2020–21. We also added certain requirements to conduct onsite audit activities to the audit plan. The plan reflects improvements to the approach to audits and to using a risk-informed approach to related activities.

EfC increased collaboration and harmonisation opportunities nationally, including harmonising first supplier audits across the NSW, ACT, Queensland and West Australian schemes. This reduces the audit burden on suppliers while increasing assurance outcomes.

The audit and risk team visited the MRF and network operator several times during the reporting period.

Following the fire at the Hume MRF in December 2022, alternatives were found to ensure continued processing of all ACT kerbside material. EfC, in collaboration with NoWaste, closely monitored the activities of the MRF, ReCycle, to ensure the objectives of the scheme were being met.

Due to the fire, and in consultation with EfC, NoWaste amended the MRF Protocol in May 2023. The updates allowed the ACT MRF to continue to lodge claims with EfC for ACT materials processed outside of the territory. This ensured eligible containers recovered from ACT kerbsides were still.

In collaboration with NoWaste, EfC developed a new eligible container factor methodology and sample plan, which came into effect on 1 May 2023. This methodology uses kerbside audit sample data instead of MRF output data to determine the eligible container factors for the MRF. This updated approach provides an accurate representation of eligible containers recycled from ACT kerbside collections.

### Independent scheme auditor

The independent scheme auditor, RSM Australia, is responsible for providing independent oversight and specialist advice to NoWaste on audit and assurance matters across the ACT CDS risk and assurance program.

Over the year, RSM Australia undertook detailed periodic audits of EfC's risk and audit activities and associated records to ensure compliance with its obligations as the scheme coordinator and the ACT Government-approved audit plan.

EfC maintained 100 per cent compliance with this approved plan with zero non-conformances identified during the audits.

### Fraud and corruption control

Maintaining the integrity of the ACT CDS, and industry, community and regulator confidence in the scheme. Scheme partners do not tolerate fraud and corruption, and are committed to preventing, detecting and responding to it.

EfC implemented Comtrac fraud investigations management software. Its implementation included assisting several staff to pass Certificate IV in Government Investigations (PSP40416) which significantly improves the quality and efficiency of fraud investigations.

No material instances of fraud or corruption resulting in loss to the scheme were identified during 2022-23.

### Health, safety and the environment

EfC is committed to providing a safe place to work and to considering sustainability in our operations. We aim to have zero material incidents, prevent catastrophic events and reduce safety risks wherever possible.

At an organisational level, EfC ensured the ongoing implementation and independent certification of its Work Health and Safety Management System. This system aligns with ISO 45001:2018 Occupational health and safety management systems and ISO 14001:2015 Environmental management systems.

While the three scheme partner organisations are individually responsible for managing their own business safety risks, and Return-It has primary duty of care for safety across the network, EfC ensures there is a whole-of-scheme approach to safety risks. This approach has been developed in accordance with Safe Work Australia guidelines. It is managed collaboratively by scheme partners and overseen by the independent scheme auditor.

EfC did not experience or report any material health, safety or environmental incidents during 2022-23.





“

EfC maintained 100 per cent compliance ... with zero non-conformances identified during the audits.

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### Data governance, security and confidentiality

EfC recognises the cybersecurity threat landscape is continually changing and becoming more sophisticated. Safeguarding confidential and personal data across EfC's systems and networks is critical for maintaining customer trust. In 2022–23, we implemented and maintained a number of controls and measures to ensure information security, including:

- conducting staff education and training, including simulation exercises to maintain top-of-mind awareness of data security risks
- using de-identified and aggregated commercial-in-confidence supplier and exporter data when reporting to the EfC Board
- implementing independent audits of IT security, backup systems and operational processes, using data security standards to benchmark for risk assessments, controls and settings.

There were no material data or confidentiality breaches during 2022–23.



# Looking ahead to 2023–24

As the ACT Government reviews the outcomes of its consultation on the proposed expansion of the ACT CDS, EfC looks forward to working with ACT NoWaste, Return-It and other key stakeholders to ensure the scheme's ongoing success delivering tangible environmental, social and economic outcomes for the people of ACT in 2023–24 and beyond.



## Commitment to harmonisation

By the end of the 2023–24 financial year, Australia will be the first continent to have established container deposit schemes in every state and territory. This brings an enormous opportunity for more investment and development in domestic reprocessing of containers to foster a circular economy. We are committed to working with scheme coordinators in other jurisdictions and with industry peak bodies to harmonise the experience for suppliers, where possible, and to continue to work together to identify ways to make it easier to participate.

## Supporting government's transition to a circular economy

At the time of writing, the release of the ACT Circular Economy Strategy 2022–25, which aims to further reduce waste and keep resources in use, was imminent. Consultation on the proposed expansion of the ACT CDS, from a litter reduction initiative to an active contributor to the circular economy through an expanded scope of eligible containers, has closed.

The ACT CDS clearly demonstrates the benefits of extended producer responsibility and its ability to engage individuals to take responsibility for their waste. EfC looks forward to working with the ACT Government to support its vision for the future of the scheme and its potential to contribute to the ACT's ambitions to transition to a circular economy.



Danielle Smalley, CEO of Exchange for Change and Marc Churchin, CEO of Return-It at Mitchell cash-back depot.

## Increasing participation and redemptions

Maintaining high levels of community support and trust, while increasing participation and raising awareness of how the ACT CDS contributes to a sustainable future, will be a focus in the year ahead. Further research will be undertaken to identify ways to overcome barriers to participation among non-users. Our activities will also focus on increasing redemption rates by identifying where the remaining 29 per cent of supplied containers are going and developing a plan to funnel those containers into the scheme.

## Connecting with Canberrans at major events

We look forward to attending more events in 2023–24 and talking with more ACT residents about the benefits of the scheme. Plans are already underway to host information stands at the Royal Canberra Show for the first time as well as other major community events throughout the year.

“

We look forward to attending more events in 2023–24 and talking with more ACT residents about the benefits of the scheme.

”

## Continual improvement

EfC will continue to undertake regular customer satisfaction research with all stakeholders, including the ACT public, beverage suppliers, community groups, schools and the waste industry. This will help us understand any challenges or barriers being experienced, informing our efforts to make it easier for the public, community groups, schools, suppliers, exporters and MRFs to participate.

EfC will also work closely with Return-It to identify opportunities to improve the experience for customers returning containers.

# Appendix 1

# Financials

## ACT Container Deposit Scheme accounts

Financial management of the ACT CDS is based on a cost recovery model, achieving a similar outcome to that of a not-for-profit model.

The scheme coordinator receives a fixed fee to perform a number of duties, including acting as the trustee of the ACT CDS assets. The fixed fee forms part of the cost recovery model.

The scheme's accounts are independently audited each year to ensure the financial statements comply with Australian Accounting Standards and other mandatory professional requirements in Australia.

## Breakdown of contributions and costs

Table 6 shows scheme contributions and costs for 2022–23. As preparation of the financial reports is based on applicable Australian Accounting Standards, revenue and expenses are recognised net of GST. The following financial information has been prepared on an accrual basis.

**Table 6: Scheme contributions and costs for 2022–23**

Financial accounts	2022–23
<b>Revenue (AUD)</b>	
<b>Scheme contribution</b>	<b>22,973,433</b>
Finance income	
• Bank interest	144,591
<b>Total finance income</b>	<b>144,591</b>
<b>Total revenue</b>	<b>23,118,023</b>
<b>Expenses (AUD)</b>	
• Scheme refunds (container deposits)	6,119,281
• Network operator fees	6,549,467
• Materials recycling facilities' processing refund	4,175,106
• Exporters refund	3,842,518
• Scheme coordinator administration fee	1,106,659
• Scheme marketing fee	682,873
• Scheme compliance fee	365,061
• Other	277,059
<b>Total expenses</b>	<b>23,118,022</b>
<b>Profit for the period</b>	<b>0</b>





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